

Happy New Year from Task Force Eagle in Pakistan!

I hope everyone enjoyed their holiday season. As a result of this week's effort, TF Eagle has delivered a total of 7.5 million tons of relief supplies to remote villages. Our external load (slingload) operations have been a tremendous success, enabling us to lift more supplies in a shorter amount of time.

On 27 December, Brigadier Tanveer, Commander of Qasim Army Airbase, hosted a dinner in honor of TF Eagle. During the social hour, we listened to a military drum and bagpipe band and a contemporary rock band. The buffet included a mixture of traditional Pakistani dishes such as mutton with herb sauce wrapped in flat bread, as well as American favorites such as fish and chips. The dinner afforded another excellent opportunity for fellowship with our host nation partners.

On 31 December, TF Eagle gave an aerial tour for a Congressional Delegation including representatives from Florida, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Guam. The New Year's Eve festivities continued with another feast prepared by our cooks. We also received an unexpected mail delivery, which always boosts morale. Although we did not have sparklers and champagne to hail in 2006, we toasted to completing the mission and returning safely home with sparkling grape juice. We also played volleyball matches, and watched movies, as this holiday season in Pakistan will not be forgotten.

The New Year started with our first rainfall in over one month. Although the weather cancelled our flights, pilots conducted academic training in order to satisfy training requirements. We also focused on maintenance and mission planning. The rain settled the dust and improved the air quality without dampening our spirits.

In reflecting on our accomplishments, I am very proud of the hard work and dedication of TF Eagle Soldiers. The future in Pakistan seems bright as a direct result of the relief mission. We are helping to restore hope and strengthen the strategic relationship between our countries.

It is difficult to be away from home, particularly during the holidays. Many of you have felt the separation and sacrifice while your loved one is deployed. Your sacrifice is not lost. We think about you daily, just as you remember us. We appreciate the continued support of our family members and friends.

Wishing you a safe, healthy and prosperous 2006!

COL Bob Johnson